

Recent Deaths

Chris Emil Olsen

It is with deep regret that we note the death of one of our 50-year members who was so honored at the Society's January 21, 1964 meeting. Mr. Olsen passed away on June 30, 1965 in his 86th year.

Born in Copenhagen, Denmark, he was just a boy when he came to the United States. Later he studied drawing and modeling at the Mechanics Institute, and he soon became associated with the American Museum of Natural History. Here he worked under the direction of the late Dr. Roy Waldo Miner in the Department of Marine Invertebrates. While designing and constructing some of the submarine habitat groups, he developed a technique for painting in oils under water. Some of his artistic creations, produced by this new procedure, hang in the halls of the American Museum and one is now in the White House at Washington, D. C. His attainments in this field of marine research and undersea painting were honored many times and even by the King of Denmark.

As a child he was fascinated with butterflies, but his interest in insects never waned. As a young man his attention turned to the Hemiptera and particularly to the leafhoppers or Cicadellidae, then the Jassidae. He eventually donated his insect collection of 17,000 leafhopper specimens and several thousand other hemipterans to the Museum's collection. After his retirement in 1947 he devoted much of his time to, and, again, gained wide recognition for, the making of greatly enlarged and highly accurate models of insects; a mosquito, a firefly, and a drone fly enlarged 264,000 times. Every detail of the insects was reproduced by the use of micrometer scales in his microscopes.

His home in West Nyack, N. Y. was surrounded by gardens, and for many years a summer meeting of the Society was held there. His friends and his scientific colleagues will miss him.—
H. RUCKES.

Dr. Paul Mueller

The New York newspapers reported the death of Dr. Paul Mueller, age 67, on October 12, 1965 in Basel, Switzerland. Dr. Mueller, discoverer of the insect-killing properties of DDT, was awarded the Nobel Prize for medicine and physiology in 1948 for the importance of this contribution in protecting people from disease and death during World War II. He was employed in the laboratories of the Geigy Chemical Company in Switzerland testing chemical substances for their insecticidal properties when he stumbled on the compound DDT. This substance had been synthesized first in 1864 by Othmar Zeidler, a German graduate student, who did not realize his achievement. The first successful use of DDT was in combating an outbreak of the Colorado potato beetle on the Swiss potato crop in 1939. Its use in agriculture, protecting crops against insect damage, and in public health, against disease vectors, is now history.